



U.S. Department of Justice  
*Drug Enforcement Administration*  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **OPERATION DEJA VU DISMANTLES VIOLENT HEROIN/COCAINE TRAFFICKING GROUPS**

Today, Acting DEA Administrator John B. Brown, III announced the results of Operation Deja Vu, a seven-month joint effort by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), United States Customs Service (USCS), Colombian National Police, United States Attorney's Offices in eight judicial districts, and a host of state and local law enforcement agencies. This enforcement effort, which began in July of 2002, targeted violent heroin and cocaine trafficking groups operating primarily in the Northeastern United States and Puerto Rico, as well as Colombia.

Working together, DEA and the United States Customs Service identified this organization's heroin and cocaine transportation routes that originated in Medellin, Colombia, passed through secondary South American countries, and onward to Puerto Rico. From this transshipment point, the heroin or cocaine would make its way to the continental United States. Typically, the drugs would make their way from a port to New York City. DEA New York Agents became aware of this distribution hub in late July, identified numerous domestic wholesalers who were receiving and distributing the narcotics in smaller, Northeast United States cities. Local DEA task force agents in those cities initiated investigations on their portion of the distribution network. The targeted wholesale distributors used vehicles fitted with sophisticated hidden compartments to transport narcotics and money between the New York hub and lesser-populated cities including Buffalo and Rochester, New York; and Springfield, Massachusetts.

On a daily basis, these violent organizations, including the "Del Luiza Boys" – a gang very familiar to Buffalo law enforcement – used weapons and physical violence to protect and expand their narcotics empire. "Enforcers" from this and other gangs under this investigation have been involved with murders, shootings, home invasions, and violent robberies that have left in their wake multiple victims and neighborhoods in terror. Most, if not all of the organization members were predicate felons, with histories of violence and drug dealing. Some of the subjects were out on bail for narcotics violations, and at least one target was distributing cocaine, while wearing an electronic monitoring device.

In addition to the surge of violence, multiple kilogram quantities of drugs that are normally associated with larger drug networks in large, metropolitan cities were having a

devastating impact on the small cities and towns of western New York, Massachusetts and other northeast communities. In response, a close knit network of DEA-led task force officers worked tirelessly over seven months to dismantle this parasitic and virulent network. Working together, in the northeastern United States law enforcement officials have seized over \$130,000 U.S. Currency, 10 kilograms of cocaine, and 500 grams of heroin in four separate vehicle stops on the customized vehicles.

Today, approximately 400 officers and agents executed 63 arrest warrants and 29 search warrants in New York City, Buffalo and Rochester, New York; Springfield, Massachusetts; Newark, New Jersey. DEA and US Customs Agents in San Juan, Puerto Rico executed four arrest warrants and Colombian National Police Heroin Task Force officers executed six search warrants across Colombia.

Arrests in this operation total 67 in 7 cities. In addition, 21 kilograms of heroin, 8 pounds of marijuana, 17.4 kilograms of cocaine, 1.9 kilograms of crack cocaine and \$438,420 U.S. Currency have been seized. This Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) initiative was coordinated by the Special Operations Division (SOD), a joint enforcement program comprised of agents and analysts from the DEA, FBI, USCS, and IRS, as well as attorneys from the Department of Justice's Criminal Division.

For more information, please contact the DEA Office of Public Affairs at (202) 307-7977 or visit DEA's website at [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov).